AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method for modifying fibers, comprising the steps of:

applying a solution of a low substituted cellulose ether having a molar degree of substitution with alkyl and/or hydroxyalkyl groups in the range of 0.18 to 0.7 in an aqueous sodium hydroxide solution to fibers, and

causing the solution borne on fibers to coagulate,

wherein said low substituted cellulose ether is at least one selected from the group consisting of low substituted methyl cellulose, low substituted ethyl cellulose, low substituted hydroxypropyl cellulose, low substituted hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose, low substituted hydroxyethyl methyl cellulose and low substituted hydroxyethyl ethyl cellulose, and the aqueous sodium hydroxide solution consists of water and sodium hydroxide.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the aqueous sodium hydroxide solution has an alkali concentration of 2 to 25% by weight.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3 wherein the concentration of low substituted cellulose ether in the aqueous sodium hydroxide solution is 0.5 to 15% by weight.

5. (Original)   The method of claim 1 wherein the step of causing the solution borne on fibers to coagulate includes salting-out coagulation, neutralization coagulation or a combination thereof.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5 wherein an aqueous solution of salts of ammonium chloride, ammonium sulfate, sodium sulfate, sodium chloride, zinc sulfate, magnesium sulfate, sodium phosphate, ammonium phosphate, sodium thiosulfate, sodium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, sodium fatty acid salts or sodium benzenesulfonate is used for the salting-out coagulation.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the fibers are synthetic fibers.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the amount of low substituted cellulose ether solution borne on fibers (percent pickup) is 30 to 500% by weight, and wherein the percent pickup is defined by the following formula:

percent pickup = ((weight of low substituted cellulose ether solution borne)/(weight of base fibers)) $\times 100$.